

# San Francisco Bay Conservation and Development Commission

455 Golden Gate Avenue, Suite 10600, San Francisco, California 94102 tel 415 352 3600 fax 415 352 3606

May 28, 2015

**TO:** Rising Sea Level Working Group Members

**FROM:** Lawrence J. Goldzband, Executive Director (415/352-3653; [larry.goldzband@bcdc.ca.gov](mailto:larry.goldzband@bcdc.ca.gov))  
Joe LaClair, Chief Planning Officer (415/352-3656; [joe.laclair@bcdc.ca.gov](mailto:joe.laclair@bcdc.ca.gov))

**SUBJECT: May 7, 2015 Commission Rising Sea Level Working Group Meeting Summary**

1. **Roll Call, Introductions and Approval of Agenda.** Rising Sea Level Working Group Chair Wasserman called the meeting to order at approximately 11:10 am. Commissioners present: Doherty, McElhinney, Pemberton (via phone), and Pine. Also attending: Vice Chair Halstead Robert Blizzard (CalTrans), Warner Chabot (SFEI), Wendy Manley (Wendel Rosen), and Leslie Alden (Marin County).

2. **Approval of April 2, 2015 Working Group Meeting Summary.** The meeting summary was approved with no corrections or comments.

3. **Communicating about Successful Adaptation.** Dr. Susi Moser, via conference call, presented her latest work on communicating successful adaptation to coastal climate change. The full presentation can be viewed at <http://www.bcdc.ca.gov/RSLWG/2015-Successful-Adaptation.pdf>.

4. **Working Group Discussion**

- a. The Commission has heard a lot about ART on a local level, as well as the implementation strategies being used to ensure that ART is successful. Such strategies include:
  - (1) Setting resilience goals
  - (2) Focusing on the process
  - (3) Creating and maintaining a diverse group of stakeholders
  - (4) Identifying the actual problems on the ground (assets, risks, etc.)
- b. Better outcomes observed by pausing and engaging to better understand the true vulnerabilities and consequences of action and inaction.
- c. ART has spent a lot of time focusing on developing a decision making process. There is a large amount of time spent making decisions, and a good adaptation decision for one asset (OAK) is not necessarily a good adaptation decision for another asset (SFO).

- d. Developing Resilience Goals. Everyone wants everything. The adaptation goals are designed to be broad. As the process continues, people realize what is actually achievable and narrow their focus. It isn't helpful to tell people what they can't have right from the start, but rather go through the process and help people draw those conclusions on their own.
- e. How do we go from planning to actual implementation when real life concerns and difficulties (jurisdiction, budgets, politics, etc.)? People are daunted by the sheer scope of some of these adaptation goals.
- f. Acting is difficult without an actual crisis. If there was a megastorm event, it would be much easier to find the will and funding.
- g. Developing a comprehensive and diverse group of case studies around the Bay will answer in part where we are and what is achievable in adaptation planning.
- h. BCDC's 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary will be a good opportunity to start broadcasting many of these adaptation issues to a broader audience than is normally reached.
- i. When discussing feasibility, it is better to approach the conversation as a dialogue as opposed to telling people what you've already decided you're going to do. Don't talk to, talk with.
- j. Currently, sea level rise is something that most people really can't see and experience (with the exception of Marin). What is the context we need to think about as we discuss with the public, and how does this approach differ from how we talk about other disasters such as earthquakes?
  - (1) It is difficult to get people drummed up about a "slow moving" emergency. The public expects that emergencies go away once there is cleanup or rescue. But sea level rise will be here to stay. A communication strategy describing how the Bay Area is on a fifty-year journey of changing coastline and economy may be effective.
- k. The FEMA-funded OWL viewer in Marin County is a great tool to engage the public on the issues of sea level rise on a technical level. Seeing the potential effects of sea level in actual locations that people identify with can be a powerful motivator.
- l. There is already ample negative imagery about sea level rise, and the more threatening the imagery without clear solutions, the faster people shut down and lose focus.